Minister says Israel may cut UN funding over settlement ‘blacklist’

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Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan threatened to cut Israel’s funding to the United Nations Wednesday evening if the Human Rights Council publishes a “blacklist” of international companies operating in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Golan Heights.

Israel has raged against the proposed roster, calling it part of an effort to boycott the Jewish state. The US has also objected, with ambassador Nikki Haley reportedly threatening to cut funding to the UNHRC over the list.

“This is the time to make it clear to the UN that if a blacklist is published of companies operating in Judea and Samaria, Israel will completely cease its financing to the UN and significantly reduce the entry of its representatives to Israel,” Erdan wrote in a series of tweets, referring to the West Bank by its biblical names.

“Any body that participates in promoting a boycott against Israeli citizens must understand that.”

The minister later tweeted in English on the matter, but diluted his threat to saying that Israel “must reexamine all funding and cooperation with the UN.”

His comments came shortly after Haley made a similar statement warning against publication of the blacklist.

“If you publish the list against settlements we will harm your funding,” a [report](https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-threatens-to-cut-un-funding-over-settlement-blacklist-report/) Wednesday by Channel 2 news quoted Haley as saying regarding the UN Human Rights Council.

The report also said Haley, who has strongly criticized the blacklist and the UN Human Rights Council over its “anti-Israel bias,” warned that the US may pull out of the council if the list of companies is published.

She has previously called the list “shameful.”

“I salute Nikki Haley,” Erdan tweeted in English and Hebrew.

The prospect of the publication of the list has caused concern among Israeli officials, who worry it could strengthen efforts to boycott the Jewish state and harm Israeli firms.

“The significance of the publication is that the UN would be turning itself into a BDS group,” an unnamed official at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs told Channel 2, referring to the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions movement, though BDS targets all Israeli companies or those affiliated with the Jewish state and makes no distinction between Israel proper and the West Bank.

[Last week](http://www.timesofisrael.com/us-trying-to-thwart-un-blacklist-of-settlement-friendly-firms/), the Washington Post reported that the Trump administration had urged the Human Rights Council not to publish the list, saying the move was “counterproductive” and would not advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Last year, the UN body unanimously voted to compile a database of all business enterprises that have enabled or profited from the growth of Israeli settlements in areas Palestinians see as part of their future state.

The proposal, put forward by the Palestinian Authority and Arab states in 2016, included a condemnation of settlements and called on companies not to do business with Israeli settlements.

According to the Washington Post report, UN human rights chief Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein intends to publish the list by the end of 2017, despite opposition from the US and Israel.

Hussein, a Jordanian diplomat spearheading the initiative, had already agreed to postpone publishing the list once this year, in part due to US pressure, the Post said. He has reached out to member states for input before September 1.

American companies on the list include Caterpillar, TripAdvisor, Priceline.com, Airbnb and others, The Post reported, citing those familiar with the database.

Since 2007, Israel has been the only country whose alleged human rights abuses are regularly discussed in the framework of a permanent item on the Human Rights Council’s agenda.